

## THE MASK *of* AGAMEMNON

### *Cast of Characters*

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| HEINRICH SCHLIEMANN | 47 at top of play, male, German/American “archeologist”. |
| SOPHIA SCHLIEMANN   | 17 at top of play, Heinrich’s wife.                      |
| MASK                | 3300 at top of play, gold funerary mask.                 |

### *Notes*

The ‘sound’ heard throughout the play should be industrial, violent, invasive. Metal hitting stone. The sound of human invasion in the earth, the sound of Schliemann digging.

The ‘noise’ is natural. Creaking. Groaning. Roaring. Many different noises. The noise of the ground’s protest of being dug up.

When two characters are in the same space they can communicate freely; characters in separate spaces may hear each other or may not but they do not really listen.

Unless otherwise specified, the action takes place in the Mask room of the Schliemann household.

“...” indicates a pause to sit in, to think or to change thoughts.

*Mycenae. Underground. Dark. Sometime  
between 2500 BCE and 1876 CE.*

MASK

The earth is dirt.

*Sound.*

That's why they're interchangeable, the words. People sometimes use one like the other, or in its place. 'Handfuls of earth' and all that. They never mean the plants or the magma or the crawling little creatures, they mean the dirt.

The earth is dirt and rocks.

*Sound.*

Sometimes people move rocks and put them on top of other rocks and call it something new, but it all ends up the same.

The earth is dirt and rocks and metal.

*Sound.*

I'm metal. I've been melted and cooled and pounded and engraved and buried, alongside the dirt and the rocks and the creatures and the water.

There's so much water.

*Sound.*

There's a chasm here. A steep shaft. A stairwell that descends straight down into the earth. It's a well, and the water in it rises and falls with the seasons and I'm not that close to it, but I can feel the soil dampen and I know when it's high.

*Sound.*

There are people who lived here their entire lives and still forgot that in the spring the water is higher, and they would walk down into the blackness. You could hear it.

*Sound.*

Step.

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

SCHLIEMANN

I've found him.

Someone bring me the camera!

Well don't look at me like that, I can't work  
the bloody thing. Take a photo!

*A flash.*

Come closer, no! No - not that close

Just there, that's perfect. Look at him.

Have you ever seen anything like it?

*SCHLIEMANN runs his hands over MASK.*

Step.

Step.

Splash.

Splash.

The same man, again and again and again and  
again and again and again and again.

And the rocks go up and the rocks go down  
and the earth eats them again and then shakes  
and heaves spits them out and I am here.

I know that's not exactly riveting material, but  
there isn't much to do.

For a short time I rested on flesh but it pulled  
away. I rested on bone and it crumbled. I lay  
here in dust and I listen.

So that's what I know.

The earth is dirt and I am metal and I don't  
like touching rotting bodies and every once in  
a while a person will fall into a well even  
when they know it's there.

And someone's coming closer.

I think I know that too.

The dirt is falling off of me and his palms are  
damp.

*SCHLIEMANN strokes MASK.*

*SCHLIEMANN caresses MASK.*

I've done it. I have gazed on the face of Agamemnon.

Pack away the rest from the burial pit.

Well then... I don't know, just take the gold. The fewer bags we have the less likely we'll be looked into by customs again. No, I know there's more but— we're here in the land of kings! Why bother with broken pieces of pottery? Just- okay, take as much as we have room for, leave out the rest.

Yeah, it'll be fine, it lasted this long didn't it?

The ship is waiting.

Be careful with him.

You're so beautiful. I have so many questions. Are you looking at me? I can't tell.

It's too bad your body wasn't better preserved, I would have loved to take that too, I had dreams of a case — a big glass case.

I would've fitted it with gold rims and hinges

There is earth clinging to his hands and his shoes and his suit and he is clinging to me and he polishes me but his breath keeps fogging up my surfaces.

Ag-a-mem-non.

Aga  
Mem  
Non  
Agamemnon.

It's a silly word.

*Noise.*

Cover it up.

Cover it up. Cover it up. Cover it up.

I don't want to go.

*A ship. 1876.*

I didn't know there was this much water in the world. I knew the earth where I lay eventually met the water but...

There is so much more than I thought.

*Noise.*

They're screaming. Can you hear them? At the bottom where the dirt meets the water we're screaming and the waters rusts us

*Noise.*

—spared no expense— only the best for a king, of course. I could've put you next to your body and anytime you felt particularly lonely I would've rested you back upon the skull and you would've looked magnificent "the conquerer of Troy!", wouldn't that have been wonderful? What was Troy like? I haven't found it yet but I know that I know where it is, I just need to get there — I think I'll go there next, were the walls as tall as they say?

God, you are beautiful.

I wish we had your body, were you really killed in a bath? Or was that a kind of Aeschylean fantasy? Did you know Aeschylus? Of course not that was fifth century stupid, stupid, stupid.

Anyways I don't think a woman really could've killed a king as magnificent as yourself, even one as wretched and backwards as Clytemnestra. I think my first wife, Ekaterina, wanted to kill me sometimes, but she didn't have the courage to do it. Ha! All in the past now anyways. Here we have a fresh start and it smells like... green and the sea, the little white flowers that dot the rocky hills, don't you think so? Can you smell? You do have nostrils, may I?

Glad we got out of there before the rain came in, huh?

And the water eats away at our edges

*Noise.*

And the bubbles hiss up to the surface and burst.

*Rainfall.*

Sky water.

Rain.

They were comfortable in the Earth and now

*Noise.*

The rain.

The earth washes away and he didn't cover

I had a room made up for you.

Not made up but-

There's a place for you.

Right here.

*The Schliemann House.*

I have to meet with the archeological association, let them know all about you!

Send out some telegrams too.

But I'll be back before you know it, don't you worry!

*SCHLIEMANN leaves.*

*SOPHIA enters.*

SOPHIA  
Hello?

Oh.

Hello.

Hope everything is to your liking.

Sir.

*She bows.*

Apparently, you're a king. Is it 'your majesty' then? Your excellency? Your royal highness of the Great Chipped Forehead and Wondrous Crooked Moustache. How honoured and truly, deeply blessed we are to have you in our home.

them up and he didn't cover them up and he didn't cover them up and they are screaming and tumbling and breaking apart and my home is flooding and it's not a home anymore it's a broken pit and it's full of water and the well is rising again can you feel it? The well and the water and the rain and the pit and the earth and it's running down hill we're all running down hill.

*Noise.*

I wish he'd stop touching me.

Oh.

*Noise.*

It's too cold in here it's too clean in here it's too dry in here.

There are too many people.

"Hello"

Ha.

Not a king.

This is. This is ridiculous. I just saw him talking to you and- I don't know. You know how sometimes people talk to plants and it's supposed to help with... something?

Plants don't have ears though.

You do.

I do.

"Our home"

That's weird. It doesn't feel like home, not yet.

If I tell them to move a cabinet they'll move the cabinet and I thought I might be cleaning more or cooking occasionally or doing something but he hired people for everything. "Staff make a house look grand."

I could ask them to move you? That pedestal looks a little hefty for me to budge by myself, but I'm sure I could ask someone to help and we could get you facing a window, would you like that?

Please don't do that.

Ha. 'Would you like that?'

I would not.

You are a piece of metal.

Yep.

Yep.

...

Well, I'll leave you to it, I guess.

But you know it's crazy he came in here like a whirlwind and told me there was something I Absolutely Had to see and it's... it's you. And no offence but it's been like a month and I've just been waiting here and I only saw the man once before the wedding and off he goes again and it's like "Hey, I'm still in your house! What do you want?"

You know?

And I've spent weeks here just waiting and trying to slog through that poetry he left and he said it was in Greek but it's in ancient Greek and I know he knows they're not the same but I'm not very good at the old stuff yet and he left me with a loom — like a “make your own fabric loom” and I'm trying but it turns out I'm not great at that either because it's the nineteenth century and I can buy fabric but I thought he might want something that I made so I tried to make curtains for the bed but the lines were all uneven and the staff took them down before he got back and I don't blame them.

Maybe I shouldn't have let mother put me on the bureau list in the first place.

I don't know how to be good at this.

And I'm not really upset about it, I don't think? I'm just... confused? I don't know, I'm talking to a piece of metal, I'm going to go now.

*SOPHIA exits.*

*SCHLIEMANN enters.*

SCHLIEMANN

I hope I didn't leave you alone too long!

Huh.

It's still too cold in here.

But too much light.

The sun isn't as warm as I remember it being or maybe we're too deep within these walls for it to really reach us.

It just looks like it's sunny but it doesn't feel like it.

I hope she knows what the sun is supposed to feel like. I hope I'm remembering it right. This isn't it.

The earth I knew is still here, underneath these foundations. I feel it like roots stretching

Was that Sophia leaving just then? What did you think of her?

She's really something, isn't she? We were married the day I left for Mycenae, to find you, so we haven't had a chance to... well, you know. I can't wait.

Seventeen.

She has that classical profile, you know? People will say that it's in the nose, 'Roman nose' and all that, but it really gets solidified somewhere around the chin. A delicate roundness.

...

I don't think it's just the chin though... the slope of the cheeks... that definitely has something to do with it. Full, but not rounded. Soft, without falling. A Venus in marble.

Don't give me that look.

I deserve this.

A piece of art!

Fucking Ekaterina was like fucking a corpse. No, a mummy! With loose wrappings and skin, stretched out, hanging off of sharp bones. Her elbows, her knees, her breast bone, poking out of fleshy valleys. She smelled like dust and her breath was ashen and came in hot puffs that I can still taste on my tongue.

I look at her and I see death, lines, age, time, wearing away.

Maybe I should have killed her.

Saved her from the inevitable.

Across the world to find me.  
This land here has a tendency to break, thrust rocks up through the ground's surface and scatter the earth.

Violent stones.

Violent stones take violent actions.

*Noise.*

The stones don't comprehend what violence is but that doesn't make the quaking any less traumatic.

Damaging

*Noise.*

Leaving wreckage in its wake.

*Noise.*

The decay.

*Noise.*

Can you imagine fucking Sophia? The soft hips and smooth, unblemished skin? I picture it being like holding pearls, smooth and cool to the touch until they absorb your body heat, then they seem to burn from within all on their own.

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

Sophia Engastromenos, it sounds almost royal, does it not?

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

An ad in a newspaper, that was it. An ad in a newspaper and a chat with the marriage bureau, and suddenly I am Pygmalion reborn! With handfuls and armfuls and mouthfuls of marble.

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

...

*Noise.*

I deserve this.

*Noise.*

Right?

I do.

*Noise.*

It's not.

*Noise.*

You don't think I'm doing anything...

No.

You're right.

*Noise.*

Nothing that feels this good can be bad, not really.

Thank you.

*SCHLIEMANN kisses MASK's forehead.*

I can tell we'll be fast friends.

*MASK screams. It sounds like 'noise'.*

*SCHLIEMANN exits.*

The rain dried and and the ground is cracking  
and we're spilling out of it in the dust

And the wind blows it away

The rivets of rock make their way here, the  
dust I lay in lies there still.

The dust is blowing away.

Everything is blowing away.

Soon it will just be the rocks in their piles that  
tell you where I was.

Under the lion rock.

The wind is the worst kind of weather.

It doesn't feed it doesn't nurture it doesn't  
warm it rarely cools

It just blows and blows and blows

And carries it all away.

*SOPHIA enters.*

SOPHIA  
Hi

I thought I'd.

Hi.

Do you remember me?

I guess it doesn't matter.

I put the weavings back out, I thought you  
might want to know. They aren't around the  
bed they're just hanging on the back of a chair  
but they're done.

The threads looked red so I thought it would  
be red but they're woven so tightly together  
that it's more of a purple-blue-black-inky.

Like the sea at night.

I told him about the poetry I was reading but he didn't want to hear it. He said I could read him a little Homer but I only remembered the version from school and it was in prose and apparently it's not the Iliad unless it's in verse and then he didn't want to talk about poems anymore.

But I still have the books, so I thought I could read some to you, if that's okay?

I thought he'd like this one, it's Sappho — fragment number 141 — it felt... appropriate somehow.

“but there, a bowl of ambrosia

had been mixed

and Hermes taking the jug poured wine for the gods

and then they all

held cups

and poured libations and prayed  
every good thing for the bridegroom”

I just thought he'd like it.

Oh well.

Oh

κράτηρ ἐκέκρατ  
(krater hekekrat)

Ἑρμῆαις δ' ἔλων ὄλπιν θεοῖσ' εἰνοκόησε.  
(Hermes d'elon holpin theos einoikoise)

κήνοι δ' ἄρα πάντες  
(kenoi d'ara pantes)

καρχάσι ἦχον  
(karkasi hekon)

κᾶλειβον, ἀράσαντο δὲ πάμπαν ἔσλα γάμβρω  
(kalebon harasantō de pampan hasla gambroi)

“Ammeon”

I didn't know.

It. Wasn't right.

It's not possible

Ammeon Ammeon Ammeon

I like this one best.

Someone will remember us  
I say  
Even in another time

It's a nice thought

To remember.

Remember.

He gave me a different book, different translation, said it was more like “But I claim there will be some who remember us when we are gone,” but I didn't like that as much. It feels like someone covering their tracks. Sappho's supposed to float, I think. “Even in another time.”

...

Do you ever wish that you- I don't know. That you didn't think so much? Didn't remember? That you could just be without knowing you were being?

I knew that I would be someone else and something else in here and I thought I could do it but it's like

My mouth smells like his mouth. My arms my neck my breasts. I'm being eaten alive and I'm so goddamn aware of it, and the situation wouldn't be any different if I wasn't but I think it would be easier?

Another time.

μνάσασθαί τινά φαιμι καὶ ἕτερον ἀμμέων  
(Mnasesthai tina phaimi kai eteron ammeon)

Someone will remember us  
I say  
Even in another time

I don't remember enough

But I remember some

Μνάσασθαί  
Mnasesthai

καὶ ἕτερον ἀμμέων  
kai eteron ammeon

Yes

I think so to.

Εἰμί  
(eimi)

πάρθενον ἀδύφωνον  
(parthenon aduphonon)

Easier if I could just say: Eat me. I want to shut down for you, I want to be an accessory to your life. I don't want to think or be. Cut open my brain and take out the part that knows. Just hold me and fill me up and leave me and do it again and again and again.

πόλυ πάκτιδος άδυμελεστέρα . . .  
(polu paktidos adumelestera...)

I don't want to make decisions I don't want to be alive. Put me on a shelf like a vase to be taken down when you need. Smash me on the ground if it suits you. My hands smell like your hands smells like your mouth and I am gone.

χρύσω χρυσότερα . . .  
(kruso krusotera...)

But I'm here.

You're a good listener, you know?

τὸ μέλημα τῶμον  
(to melema tomon)

*SCHLIEMANN enters.*

SCHLIEMANN  
I'm back.

SOPHIA  
You're back

He's back.

SCHLIEMANN  
I brought you something.

SOPHIA  
You did?

SCHLIEMANN  
I did.

SOPHIA  
What is it?

What is it?

SCHLIEMANN  
Stand very still.

SOPHIA  
Okay.

SCHLIEMANN  
It's delicate.

SOPHIA  
Okay.

SCHLIEMANN  
I don't want you to wreck them.

SOPHIA  
Okay.

What are they.

They're screaming.

*SCHLIEMANN take out the jewels from Troy.*

SOPHIA  
They're beautiful.

SCHLIEMANN  
Don't touch them.

SOPHIA  
Okay.

They're screaming they're screaming they're screaming.

*SCHLIEMANN dresses SOPHIA in the jewels.*

SOPHIA  
It's heavy.

SCHLIEMANN  
It's supposed to be.

How do you not hear them????

SCHLIEMANN  
Magnificent.

SOPHIA  
Ouch.

HOW DO YOU NOT HEAR THEM???

SCHLIEMANN  
You are...

SOPHIA  
What?

*Noise.*

SCHLIEMANN  
Helen.

SOPHIA  
Oh. Thank you.

*Noise.*

SCHLIEMANN  
Stand still.

SOPHIA  
I am.

*Noise.*

SCHLIEMANN  
Beautiful.

Come quickly!

*Noise.*

Yes, set it up right there.

Don't move

SOPHIA  
I'm not.

SCHLIEMANN  
Beautiful.

*A flash.*

It's screaming it's screaming what did you do  
why is it open everything open everything  
breaking apart.

SOPHIA  
I'm not beautiful.

*A flash.*

How can you not hear it?

I am not beautiful. Don't sit there and tell me I  
am,

It's rain wind sky sun fire.

It's not an accomplishment and I don't want it.

It burns.

My hands are claws.

*A flash. Another.*

I can tear you bloody.

I want to be a gorgon.

medusa.

I want to turn you to stone for looking at me.

Please stop looking at me.

Please stop.

Please stop.

Please stop.

stop.

Stop.

STOP.

SCHLIEMANN

We're all done!

Darling, do you think you could pack this up?

Carefully of course.

*SCHLIEMANN exits.*

SOPHIA

I- yes, of course.

*Sound.*

Melt me down again please tear me apart and melt me down.

It's screaming.

Make it stop.

I can't make it stop.

Why can't you stop?

stop.

Stop.

STOP.

SOPHIA

Is he gone?

MASK

Looks like it.

SOPHIA

How can you-

MASK

I don't know.

Do you?

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
No.

MASK  
Okay

SOPHIA  
Okay.

MASK  
Where did he go?

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
Back to Troy, I think.

MASK  
That seems right.

SOPHIA  
How do you know?

MASK  
It's far but you can still hear it. It's open.

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
Oh.

MASK  
Can you hear it?

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
No? No, I don't think so.

*Sound.*

MASK  
Oh. I thought you might be able to.

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
I didn't tell him.

MASK  
Tell him what?

SOPHIA  
I'm pregnant

MASK  
Congratulations

SOPHIA  
Hm.

MASK  
That'll be... something to do at least?

SOPHIA  
I don't think so.

It's not for me.

It's been planted, I'm just the field.

He'll pull it from the earth and call it  
Agamemnon.

MASK  
Ha.

You don't really think that, do you?

SOPHIA  
Yes.  
Actually I do.

*SOPHIA exits.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*Sound.*

*SCHLIEMANN enters.*

SCHLIEMANN  
I wasn't here.

I was away. I was away and I didn't even  
bring anything back and everything is covered  
in sand.

*Noise.*

I wasn't even here but now I have a son.

Have you seen him?

I think he looks like me.

We named him. I named him.

Agamemnon Schliemann.

*Noise.*

It's a strong name. Lots of syllables. Sounds important.

Do you like it?

Of course you do. I named him for you.

I hope that's okay.

*Noise.*

I missed you.

...

I went to Troy. I found it. I went there just like you did, I was just there again and it's... well, it isn't what I pictured it looking like. There was a lot of sand. Covering everything. And everything is sort of broken up. I wasn't expecting towering walls and archers and kings but it's supposed to be Troy, you know?

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

My father gave me a picture book when I was just a boy, it had an illustration of the sacking of Troy. Watercolour flames and screaming widows and walls that filled the page and seemed to pierce the sky. It was... magnificent.

*Noise. Noise. Noise.*

This was sand.

...

I think you may be it. I mean. After everything. The years of business and accountants and then the years of dirt and digging and the years of dealing with

diplomats and customs and scrambling for sites and I just think you're it.

*Noise.*

You're the best thing I'm ever going to have. Or do. Or find. Or be.

*Noise.*

The Mask of Agamemnon.

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

You know, I sent a telegram off as soon as I found you. Straight to the Greek King. I told him "I have gazed upon the face of Agamemnon," and I was right. And no matter how many times they ask for authentication, or to re-do the site survey, or- whatever! I know I'm right. I mean look at you.

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

Look at you.

*Noise.*

Will you have a drink with me?

*Noise.*

*Noise.*

To toast my son?

I should go up and see him but it sounds like it's still very... messy.

So... a drink.

*SCHLIEMANN offers a flask to the MASK.*

Abstaining then? Smart man.

I'll indulge a little bit myself, you know, given the occasion.

You sure I can't tempt you?

There's a good sport.

*SCHLIEMANN holds his flask to the MASK's 'mouth'.*

Oh no, clumsy me.

I've got it.

*SCHLIEMANN wipes his hand over MASK.*

*SCHLIEMANN stops.*

*SCHLIEMANN licks the drink off of MASK.*

*Again.*

*Again.*

*SCHLIEMANN pulls on MASK. A piece of gold comes off.*

I'm sorry.

*SCHLIEMANN looks at the piece.*

*SCHLIEMANN swallows it.*

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

*SCHLIEMANN exits.*

MASK  
It's fine.

I don't have nerve endings.

I'm metal.

It's not fine, but it's fine.  
I mean it's not fine it is very much not fine.

I can't tell if the earth is getting louder or quieter.

The world around it is getting so much busier  
it's hard to make out.

That wasn't fine.

There were maggots.

The first year underground. There was a body.  
Bodies? Flesh. So there were all kinds of  
creatures that feast on flesh. I was not the main  
attraction, but I could feel them constantly.  
Packed in. Writhing. Squeezing between me  
and the face that lay beneath me, bloated,

swarming when it got good. The eyes were good. The tongue was good. The lips were good. The nose was not, but we can't have everything, can we.

They ate until it was small and they were big and it was oozing and they were shining.

He reminds me of them.

But the maggots were kinder.

*SOPHIA enters. Some years have gone by.*

*Sound.*

MASK

Where do you think he is this time?

SOPHIA

No idea.

MASK

How nice.

*Sound.*

SOPHIA

ανάγά εμνάσεσθ' ἄ  
καὶ γὰρ ἄμμες ἐν νεό[τατι  
ταυτ' [ἐ]πόημεν  
(Anaega emnassestha  
Kai gar hammes hen neotati  
taut hepoemmen)

MASK

You will remember  
For we in our youth  
Did these things

πολλα [μ]ὲν γὰρ καὶ κά[λα  
(Polla men gar kai kala hey men)

SOPHIA

Yes, many and beautiful things

*Sound.*

...

MASK  
You haven't been here in a while

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
You're not always here when I come

MASK  
I am.

SOPHIA  
Oh.

...

*Sound.*

My hair is turning grey.

MASK  
Is it?

SOPHIA  
Well one of them is.

*Sound.*

I pulled it out, see?

It's still dark on the end but from the root until  
about half-way it's grey, silver, white.

MASK  
You are younger than anyone else I've ever  
met.

*Sound.*

SOPHIA  
No I don't need you to-

MASK  
Are you scared? Of aging?

SOPHIA  
No. Of what he...

*Sound.*

Women have a shelf life.

I was going to say 'his women have a shelf  
life,' but it's not that exclusive.

*Sound.*

New and different are only new and different  
until you learn them.

*Sound.*

And I know that he'll get tired of me too. I don't think I even exist to him unless we're in the same room. And I don't have anywhere to go.

*Sound.*

MASK

I know he thinks about you when you aren't in the room.

*Sound.*

SOPHIA

Don't coddle me. I'm disposable. We all are. Everyone but you, the great "Mask of Agamemnon".

MASK

I'm not the-

*Sound.*

SOPHIA

I know you're not, but it doesn't matter what you are or aren't, it just matters what he thinks you are.

MASK

I missed you.

SOPHIA

I didn't go anywhere.

MASK

Yes you did.

SOPHIA

Well- I missed you too.

...

"not one girl I think who looks on the light of the sun will ever have wisdom like this."

MASK

οὐδ' ἴαν δοκίμωνι προσίδοισαν φάος ἄλιω  
ἔσσεσθαι σοφίαν πάρθενον εἰς οὐδένα πω  
χρόνον τεαύταν

Oud hian dokimomi prosidoisan phaos halio  
Hessesthai sophian parthenon eis oudena to  
kronon teautan

Number 56?

SOPHIA  
You're good.

MASK  
I've had years of practice.  
...

He won't get the chance.

SOPHIA  
What?

MASK  
He won't get the chance to throw you away.  
He won't last that long.

SOPHIA  
How do you know?

MASK  
The earth... it knows things sometimes. I hear  
things sometimes.

SOPHIA  
Oh.

...

Do you know when I-

MASK  
No.

SOPHIA  
Why not?

MASK  
They just aren't talking about it.

The ground isn't waiting for you.

SOPHIA  
Hm.

*SCHLIEMANN stands alone in the empty mask room.*

*For a while.*

SCHLIEMANN  
Oh no please don't.

Stay a while?

Okay.

...

Oh. I had to send him out to be cleaned, get some minor repairs done. Little fiddly technical things you don't really pick up on when you're in a supervisory role.

How have you been?

Either or?

It was good.

I discovered the foundations of the fortress there, it was really quite something.

How are the children? I haven't been up yet.

*Sophia enters.*

SOPHIA  
Oh.

Sorry, I didn't realize you were home. I'll just go-

Okay.

...

Where are they?

I see.

Today? Or in general?

Fine.

How was Tiryns?

I can imagine.

They're well. Andromache started school.

Did she? That's wonderful.

Yes. Wonderful.

...

...

Sophia?

Yes?

I...

Yes?

I didn't...I guess, what I mean is, I thought I had the right idea. With everything. With the way I went about everything. And now I just. I don't know.

...

Are you happy?

...

Are you?

*Some time goes by.*

*Some time goes by.*

*SCHLIEMANN exits.*

*MASK is back. SOPHIA is here.*

*Sound.*

MASK  
It's getting worse.

*Sound.*

Louder.

*Sound.*

Definitely louder.

*Sound.*

It never stops it's a constant hum, a rumble, a roar. Everything is shaking but nothing is moving but I can feel it still.

*Sound.*

It overflows.

*Sound.*

I don't know how you can't hear it

*Sound.*



*Music.*

SOPHIA  
Would you like to dance?

MASK  
How?

SOPHIA  
I could hold you up. Would you be okay with  
me touching you?

MASK  
Yes.

SOPHIA  
Okay

*SOPHIA picks up MASK.*

*They dance.*

SOPHIA  
I love you.

Don't.

You don't have to say anything, it doesn't  
really matter. Or it does? But I know you can't  
really feel like... like that? Like this? So it  
doesn't matter in that way it's just that I love  
you and that feeling is warm and comfortable  
and soft and-

I don't know

It's just a nice feeling, even if I'm feeling it  
alone. And I thought you should know.

*They dance.*

*The song ends.*

*Noise.*

*SOPHIA puts MASK down and exits.*

*SCHLIEMANN enters.*

SCHLIEMANN

You won't believe what they're saying now!

*Noise.*

They're saying you aren't you.

They're cracking down! Apparently regulations need to be put in place! Standards need to be applied!

*Noise*

*Noise*

I mean I would love to see them just try to come up with something half as effective a tool as controlled dynamite, we were at the Trojan level in minutes. Minutes!

*Noise.*

*Noise*

*Noise.*

Who else can say that?

**MASK**

stop

I mean if they didn't want me to do it why did they let me do it?

stop

Why didn't anyone tell me to stop?

Stop

I would have stopped if they told me to stop why didn't they tell me to stop? I wouldn't have done it if you told me stop!

Stop

**STOP**

I don't know why no one ever tells me to stop, why won't someone tell me to stop, tell me to stop, tell me to stop, I can't stop, please, tell me to stop. Tell me to stop. Tell me to stop. Tell me to stop!

**STOP**

**STOP**

**STOP**

**STOP**

**STOPSTOPSTOPSTOPST  
OPSTOPSTOPSTOPSTOP**

**MASK**

Everyone has told you to stop! I don't know how you've heard anything but 'stop' come out of anyone's mouth. You should stop. You should've never started. I have been telling you to stop for

decades. The world has been telling you to stop for years. The pieces and souls and friends washed down the hills of Mycenae and blown away in the dust of Troy and crushed and compacted and exploded at Tiryns have used every atom of their being to scream 'stop' and you never heard them.

SCHLIEMANN

How are you-

MASK

I am. I have been. I have always been and you have touched and felt and smeared and coddled and sweated on and drooled over and crushed but you have never seen.

SCHLIEMANN

I love you.

MASK

No, you don't.

SCHLIEMANN

I LOVE YOU

MASK

How?

SCHLIEMANN

You

What is there that I haven't said to you?

I love you! You're the best thing I ever found! You're beautiful. You're my best friend.

You're the mask of Agamemnon!

MASK

I'm not the mask of Agamemnon.

SCHLIEMANN

Don't be silly.

MASK

I'm not the mask of Agamemnon.

SCHLIEMANN

I know what those frauds have been saying about me and while I don't know what you've heard -it is just wonderful that you can hear, I've been pretending that you could for years and to be speaking with you is really just-

MASK

I Am Not The Mask of Agamemnon.

I don't even know who he is, outside of you blabbering on about him.

If he was, he was after me. Lying above me.

And anything that was his washed down the hill after you took me away.

And I don't know the man whose body rotted beneath mine but I know he tasted of earth and fruit and sun and wool, and had none of the sand and salt air of a sea-lord sailing to the dusty shore's of Ilium.

I am just a mask.

And you are not my friend.

...

SCHLIEMANN

I-

...

*SCHLIEMANN exits.*

*Some time.*

MASK

It stopped.

SOPHIA

The noise?

MASK

The sound.

He's gone?

SOPHIA

He's gone.

MASK

What happened?

SOPHIA

He was sick. An ear-ache. There was a surgery and he was told to rest. And he went out instead, there was an excavation in Naples he “had to see right away”. And then he went to sleep.

MASK

That’s not what I pictured.

SOPHIA

I’ll see if he can give it another go, but I’m not sure if he has it in him.

MASK

Ha.

What now?

SOPHIA

I don’t know. We have forty years, give or take.

...

I’m tired.

MASK

Then rest.

SOPHIA

Can I sit with you a while?

MASK

You can sit with me forever.

...

*Forty years go by.*

δέδυκε μὲν ἃ σελάννα  
(Deduk-ey men a selanna)

SOPHIA

Moon has set

MASK

μέσαι δὲ νύκτες  
(Mesai de nuktes)

SOPHIA

Middle night

MASK

παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα  
(Para d'erket hora)

SOPHIA

The hour goes by.

*SOPHIA is dead.*

MASK

ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω  
(Ego de mona kateudo)

...

ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω  
(Ego de mona kateudo)

...

ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω  
(Ego de mona kateudo)

...

Alone I lie.

Oh.

I didn't...

That was too fast.

168C

That fragment is nice, we never did that one.

Do you know it?

ποικίλλεται μὲν γαῖα πολυστέφανος

(poikilletai men gaia polustephanos)

It's a good one I swear, it's almost a sentence.

You can't go

Don't go yet

"spangled is the earth with her crowns"

See?

I told you.

It's a good one

*A glass box is built around MASK.*

*Archeological Museum, Athens.  
Sometime between 1932 and today.  
In the box the voice echoes.*

MASK

The earth is dirt.

Yes.

The earth is dirt.

But the earth is blood and the earth is bone and the earth is flesh and the earth is sweat.

And the earth walks by me every day.

And the earth smells like flowers and honey and the sweat on the back of your neck when the day is warm and your hair is up.

I can't smell anything here.

The earth is stones, rocks, graphite, granite and it shakes and it screams and I don't hear it anymore because it never stops screaming.

It never stops digging.

It never stops breaking.

It never stops it never stops it never stops it never stops.

They know I am not what they say I am but I'm still something that is wanted and to tell people what I am they call me what I am not.

But I am.

Something.

And I know.

Things.

I think I do like to be touched.

I think I like poems.

I think I like to be warm.

I think I will be behind this glass for a very long time.

So that's what I know.

*End of play.*